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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 004133

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TAGS: PREL OTRA TU CY IZ EU

SUBJECT: DAS KENNEDY: DISCUSSIONS ON IRAQ, CYPRUS, AND EU

REF: A. SECSTATE 152647

1B. ANKARA 3946

(U) Classified by CDA Robert S. Deutsch for Reasons 1.4 b,d.

11. (C) Summary: In July 20/21 Ankara meetings at the Turkish MFA and General Secretariat for EU Affairs, EUR/DAS Laura Kennedy solicited evaluations of 1) Turkey's prospects for a definite date to begin EU accession negotiations; 2) steps forward in the wake of the Greek Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan; and 3) Iraq and the Greater Middle East.

SECRETARY GENERAL FOR EU AFFAIRS MURAT SUNGAR

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12. (SBU) Ambassador Murat Sungar, Head of Turkey's Secretariat General for EU Affairs, the GOT's EU

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harmonization and reform coordination agency, outlined his evaluation of Turkey's chances to obtain a definite EU accession negotiation date. Kennedy reiterated strong U.S. support for Turkish accession while cautioning the GOT not to slacken its reform program.

13. (C) Sungar underscored the "critical importance" to the GOT of winning a definite starting date for EU accession negotiations. He asserted Turkey accepts that EU accession will be a long process easily lasting a decade. While official hopes center on a March 2005 date, a start date by the third quarter 2005 would be acceptable. A degree of conditionality would be acceptable if it referred to completion of reforms already in train. What would not be acceptable would be lack of a start date and/or setting out new criteria as a condition. Recent legislative and constitutional reforms undertaken by the GOT, Sungar asserted, have already brought Turkey in-line with Copenhagen criteria. The key remaining element, according to Sungar, is a "very progressive penal code revamp" that will be taken up during an extraordinary meeting of Parliament in September. Sungar also referred to the foundation law, which he said would be passed by October. He stressed that old laws on religion had been intended to curb extremism of Islam but of course covered all religious organizations. Kennedy raised the issue of the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary noting that it would have enormous resonance if Turkey reopened the institution. Sungar confirmed that the decision was in train; bureaucratic oversight of the institution should soon be resolved. "We have done what we can, now we have to depend on EU capitals to produce for us," he noted.

14. (C) Like his colleagues at the MFA, Sungar expressed disappointment with what he characterized as insufficient efforts to ease the isolation of Turkish Cypriots. Sungar also took the opportunity to push for U.S. assistance in opening direct flights to the North.

DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY BAKI ILKIN

15. (SBU) MFA Deputy U/S for Northeast Mediterranean Affairs Baki Ilkin outlined the GOT's road ahead for Cyprus and disputes in the Aegean.

Cyprus

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16. (C) In a lengthy discussion with DAS Kennedy, Ilkin repeatedly underscored that Turkey has done all it can to achieve a lasting solution on Cyprus. The Greek Cypriots, he argued, do not want to compromise and are only seeking to integrate the Turkish Cypriots as a minority within the existing institutional structure. This is unacceptable to Turkey, he said. If there is no change in the Greek Cypriot mindset, which he defined as recognition of a "new partnership" on the island, there will be no progress.

17. (C) Ilkin expressed some exasperation with the slow pace of measures designed to ease the Turkish Cypriots, economic isolation. Although he said he appreciated the bureaucratic difficulties involved in preparing the way for direct air flights with trade, Ilkin added that if nothing concrete

emerges, Turkey will have no choice but to support the Turkish Cypriots indefinitely. "No Turkish government," he said, "will ever be able to abandon the Turkish Cypriots." Ilkin said the GOT was encouraged by the EU Commission's Assistance and Trade proposals but was concerned with G/C influence on council lawyers. Kennedy and CDA stressed that the USG shares the view that there must be change in the attitude of Greek Cypriot leadership for an Annan plan based process to restart. The job of the international community, he said, is to recognize the constructive role of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots and to reduce the isolation of northern Cyprus, which the USG is in the process of taking steps to achieve. Ilkin also pressed on the need for direct flights and expressed the hope that the U.S. trade and air transport measures would move ahead soon. DAS Kennedy assured him that the U.S. is working on these complex issues, which in some cases must accord with relevant international covenants. We are also coordinating closely with the EU on these matters, since the significant markets and connections for Northern Cyprus are there.

¶18. (C) Ilkin explained that the MFA realizes that it must work with the Greek Cypriots as EU members. On the customs union, Ilkin said, the MFA has formed a team to look into the modalities of how that might work, adding that what emerges will be a "model of cohabitation." Turkey knows it will be sitting at the EU table with Cyprus and must reach an accommodation. Ilkin further asserted that the EU will have no "Cyprus pretext" in considering whether to give Turkey a date to begin formal negotiations at the next summit in December.

#### Greek-Turkish Relations

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¶19. (C) Ilkin briefly touched on the exploratory talks with the Greek government on solving Aegean disputes, noting that the most recent round of talks took place July 16. Ilkin said the MFA will brief the U.S. "at some point" on progress, for our information only but that it was not yet ready to do so. While he provided no details, he clearly intimated the importance of this issue. (Comment: Turkey is presumably hoping that positive Greek-Turkish momentum might also translate into Greek help on the Cyprus front.)

#### DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY ALI TUYGAN

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¶10. (SBU) MFA Deputy Undersecretary for Middle East, Africa, Caucasus, Asia and Pacific Affairs Ali Tuygan focused on GOT concerns regarding Iraq.

#### Greater Middle East

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¶11. (C) Deputy U/S Tuygan noted that support for the Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative has increased across the region over the last several months. Regional governments are beginning to perceive that the initiative will not be imposed from above and will take into account the unique characteristics of each country and culture. The process is at a "much more favorable stage now," he claimed. Tuygan emphasized that long-term U.S. support is necessary for success, as the project is likely to take years to bear fruit. Repeating the MFA mantra, Tuygan maintained that Turkey does not intend to serve as a model for the rest of the region, but would be happy to relate its experience to those interested. "Each country should create its own model," he said.

#### Iraq

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¶12. (C) DAS Kennedy and Charge Deutsch began the Iraq discussion by stressing the USG's commitment to ending the PKK threat from Iraq. Tuygan noted that the USG had officially reiterated its long-standing policy against any official contact with the PKK or its derivatives.

¶13. (C) After quickly acknowledging that Turkey and the U.S. share the same goal with regard to the PKK, Tuygan turned to the broader Iraq issue. After reciting standard Turkish concerns about stability and territorial integrity, Tuygan argued, Turkey has a fundamental interest in Iraq's success. Turning to Kirkuk, Tuygan expressed concern that the Kurds are trying to shift the demographic balance in such a way that they will be able to dominate local politics. This risks undermining the security situation in northern Iraq. An upswing in violence there, he claimed, could spill over into the rest of the country. CDA noted that the picture Turkish officials paint for Embassy Ankara differs greatly from what we hear from U.S. officials on the ground in Kirkuk, where they say there is tension but no deliberate Kurdish campaign to marginalize other ethnic groups.

Armenia

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¶14. (C) Kennedy briefed Tuygan on SNEC Mann's latest round of talks with the Armenians and Azeris and our cautiously optimistic assessment of where the parties are. She suggested that the Turks could help quicken momentum by such moves as opening the border with Armenia and helping generate realistic expectations among the Azeris. Tuygan broke no new ground in discussing the state of Turkish-Armenian relations.

He said that as long as Armenia continues to occupy Azeri territory, it will be very difficult for any Turkish government to open the border. "If Armenia does not leave Azeri territory, it would be impossible to explain opening the border to the Turkish public." Tuygan noted that there is some discussion of an Armenian withdrawal from occupied territories, a move that he says would be a definite CBM. In such a case, Turkey would immediately begin to work on improving the bilateral relations. Tuygan reiterated, however, that Armenia must make the first step: "Encourage Armenia to make a move, and Turkey will reciprocate." (Subsequently, Caucasus chief Adali gave a far more positive and dynamic account of GOT-Armenia talks. He said he and his bosses would meet FM Oskanian in Vienna next week. He considered new steps, such as opening the border were in sight if progress continued.

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